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# Self-Concept and Social Integration : The Dutch Case as an Example

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# *Self-concept and social integration*
## The Dutch case as an example

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ABSTRACT

This article evaluates the credo 'integration while maintaining one's identity' with the help of psychological arguments. First, it explores the requirements of being a good citizen in a liberal democracy. Following Rawls, we state that justice is the cardinal liberal virtue and that this virtue includes having the disposition to respect the rights of all citizens equally. It then investigates psychological theories about identity and the relation between culture and identity. We focus on the distinction between collectivistic cultures and an interdependent self-concept on the one hand and individualistic cultures and an independent self-concept on the other. We come to the conclusion that the development into a good citizen of a liberal democracy cannot be combined with the full preservation of an interdependent self-concept. Further, we argue that the state has the right and the duty to offer civic education to all pupils, even if this means that the development of an interdependent self-concept of children from particular immigrant groups will be hampered.

KEYWORDS *citizenship, immigrants, independent self-concept, liberal democracy*

## INTRODUCTION

THE VIEW THAT ethno-cultural minorities can integrate into liberal democratic societies without losing or endangering their own identity has dominated discussions on integration and civic education for many years. This view was supported by the belief that the public morality of such a society guarantees the freedom of persons and groups to shape their own life according to the self-subscribed private morality. Therefore, immigrants can adjust to these

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societies without harming their own identity. Recently, however, this view is being questioned. Critics explicitly indicate that there can be tensions between the demands of social integration and certain moral-religious orientations of ethno-cultural minority groups. For example, the generally accepted norms and values in society about the role and position of women and the admissibility of forms of sexuality are hardly consonant with Islamic beliefs. And if these minorities do not conceive of their religion as a private morality but indeed as the only directive for the arrangement of public morality, then surely this is a threat for a liberal democracy.

This article questions the credo 'Integration while maintaining one's identity' with the help of arguments that so far hardly play a role in the aforementioned debate or at least are fully implicit. We take The Netherlands as an example of the debate continuing within every liberal democracy that has seen an influx of ethno-minority groups. We argue that integration into Dutch society is hampered by a self-concept commonly found among particular ethno-cultural minorities, among which are the Moroccan- and Turkish-Dutch. The way people understand their self is constitutive for their identity, because a conception of the self offers a more or less implicit framework for one's thinking, feelings, motivations and actions. Our premise is that desirable forms of integration are at odds with the self-conception of aforementioned minority groups, and therefore the claim that integration while maintaining one's identity is possible for these groups is – though indeed ethically sympathetic – psychologically unrealistic (Flanagan, 1991: 32). Before we begin, we want to stress that our focus is on immigrant groups. We do not deny that particular characteristics of their self-conception are also prevalent among indigenous groups in The Netherlands, for instance the ultra-orthodox Protestant communities, but their situation is different, if only because they have been part of the Dutch liberal democracy for a long time and therefore are affected by the mores of our society.

## GOOD CITIZENSHIP

A rational discussion about the issue of whether or not integration while maintaining one's identity is possible presupposes that the parties are able and willing to specify rather accurately the main components of this question. First, they have to clarify their criteria for a successful integration, which means that they have to elucidate their conception of good citizenship. Second, they have to indicate which identity they have in mind and which components are constitutive for this identity. Without these specifications it is not quite possible to decide whether the dominant identity of a certain group logically or psychologically is compatible with good citizenship in a society.

The relationship between good citizenship and a flourishing polity is instrumental; every political community needs citizens with qualities that are functional for its continued existence and vitality. Such citizens are called 'good' and their qualities are seen as virtues, at least by the advocates of the society concerned. For instance, if citizens in a liberal-democratic polity have not acquired the supporting dispositions, liberal-democratic institutions cannot function properly and might even disintegrate (Kymlicka and Norman, 1994: 352–3). In political philosophy these citizens are generally called 'liberal' and their qualities are labelled 'liberal virtues'. What are these virtues?

A liberal democracy is characterized by a coherent set of basic rights that are, in general terms, covered by the first and major principle of justice of John Rawls' political philosophy. According to this principle, the so-called principle of greatest equal liberty, 'Each person has an equal claim to a fully adequate scheme of equal basic rights and liberties, which scheme is compatible with the same scheme for all' (Rawls, 1993: 5). Its import is to protect the freedom of every citizen by guaranteeing an appropriate package of the same basic rights to all adult members of a society.[1] The distinctive virtues of the liberal citizen are precisely those characteristics that correspond to the equal liberty principle. As this basic idea is a principle of justice, the corresponding virtue, following Rawls, can be called the virtue of justice (a sense of justice). In fact this politically cardinal virtue comprises all other political-moral virtues that are constitutive of liberal citizenship. Important examples of these qualities are tolerance towards different life styles, the disposition to respect the equal rights of fellow citizens, a deeply rooted aversion against discrimination and the typical democratic attitudes, among which are the inclination to vote, to reach a compromise, to critically assess political decisions, and a willingness to comply with laws and regulations that are the outcome of democratic decision procedures (the so-called virtue of law-abidingness). The bearer of these virtues is by definition willing and able to support and uphold the liberal-democratic institutions. Therefore, all these qualities are of instrumental value for a well-functioning polity that is organized according to the equal liberty principle.[2]

The immigrant who is successfully integrated into Dutch society at least has acquired the liberal virtues. The question is whether good liberal citizenship is compatible with the self-conception of particular ethno-cultural minority groups. Before answering this the question, the issue must be raised: to what extent does (political) liberalism presupposes a metaphysical or ontological conception of the self? After all, Sandel (1982) criticized Rawls for conceiving the person in his *Theory of Justice* (1971) as an 'unencumbered self', that is, a self that has no attachments to and finds no shelter in cultural traditions. Rawls, according to Sandel, conceives the self as 'given prior to its

ends, a pure subject of agency and possession, ultimately thin' (Sandel, 1982: 94). If Sandel were right, our main question would be ontologically biased from the very beginning. In our view, however, Rawls has convincingly argued that his original position, including the veil of ignorance, is a devise of representation that has no specific metaphysical implications concerning the nature of the self (Rawls, 1993: 27; see also Kymlicka, 2002: 225).

## SELF-CONCEPTS

Research in cultural psychology has shown that persons from different cultures have different cognitions, emotions and motivations. Leading cultural psychologists claim that psychological processes are not only influenced but indeed also constituted by culture, and that, consequently, psychological processes between cultures will vary greatly (Markus and Kitayama, 1991).

An important theoretical model to order and, if possible, explain the found cross-cultural differences is the by now well-known dimension of collectivism-individualism (Triandis, 1994). In individualistic cultures (the USA and great parts of Western Europe) social behavior is determined by personal goals, which seldom coincide with those of groups like the family or colleagues, fellow believers or fellow citizens. In collectivist (Eastern-Asian and some Mediterranean) cultures on the other hand, individual values and goals are often subordinated to those of the group or the collective. Therefore, different values and corresponding personal characteristics operate in these types of societies:

> For collectivists, social order, self-discipline, social recognition, humility, honoring parents and elders, accepting my position in life, and preserving my public image. For individualists, equality, freedom, an exciting life, a varied life, and enjoyment. (Triandis, 1990: 68, 1994)

Markus and Kitayama (1991, 1994) draw upon numerous empirical findings to make a plausible case that persons in individualistic and collectivistic cultures are characterized by quite different interpretations or construals of the self. These self-concepts, typified by Markus and Kitayama (1991) as the '*independent'* and the *'interdependent self'*, comprise normative tasks that are imposed by the cultural environment.[3] The independent self, which is especially dominant in North America and Western Europe, is conceived as a rather autonomous entity composed of a unique configuration of inner qualities (traits, values, wants, needs, capacities, etc.). Accordingly, these characteristics dominate in self-descriptions; actions, of oneself and of others, get meaning and are explained by the internal repertoire of cognitive, affective and conative dispositions. Equally, personal relations of this self often originate

from or come to an end on the basis of an (implicit) assessment of (assumed) personal qualities. The interdependent self, which the authors situate not only in Asian cultures, like the Japanese, but also in Latin American and Mediterranean countries like Morocco (Markus and Kitayama, 1991: 228) and Turkey (Markus and Kitayama, 1994: 116), is constructed as part of a network of social relations, as being essentially connected with the social context. Therefore, it is not the personal traits that take a central place in self-descriptions, but the relational and public aspects of the self, like the specific social position one holds or the social roles one is supposed to perform. Behavior is not seen primarily as regulated by or a manifestation of relatively stable inner qualities, but as determined and explicable by the variable context of interpersonal relations, social norms and reciprocal patterns of expectations.

According to Markus and Kitayama self-concepts are connected with implicit, normative tasks that are characteristic for the corresponding culture and that indicate which is the most preferred way of life. The tasks for the independent self are to emancipate oneself from others, to discover and to express one's own inner qualities, and to strive for integrity, conceived as the correspondence between what one thinks and feels on the one hand, and what one says and does on the other. The cultural tasks attached to the interdependent self encompass associating oneself with others, meeting social norms and expectations, striving for interpersonal harmony and the well-being of the group or community, as well as regulating and suppressing thoughts and feelings in order to adapt effectively one's behavior to the interpersonal context. In this self-definition a person's beliefs, qualities and skills are subordinated to interdependency: 'Such voluntary control of the inner attributes constitutes the core of becoming mature' (Markus and Kitayama, 1991: 227).

Heine et al.'s (1999) psychological theory about the way culture and self become interwoven introduces the notion of 'selfways'. Psychological processes are formed by socialization in such a way that psychological and cultural processes are fine tuned. The newborn develops into a person by incorporating the 'self-ways'. These self-ways comprise both the beliefs about what it means to be a 'good', 'moral' or 'decent' person and the social practices, customs, everyday situations and institutions that preserve and further these beliefs and practices. These beliefs are transmitted among others with the help of narratives, metaphors, proverbs, icons and symbols, as well central texts (the Constitution, the Koran and the Bible). 'Selfways', according to Heine et al., 'are not just different ways of construing the self – they are more generally different ways of being, different ways of knowing, feeling, and acting' (Heine et al., 1999: 768).

Markus and Kitayama use a variety of examples to demonstrate that the different cultures and correlated self-concepts influence individual

experiences, including cognitions, emotions and motivations of individuals. Regarding emotions they indeed show rather convincingly that not only the cause, expression, function and evaluation of emotions can be culture-specific, but also that feelings themselves can vary in nature and intensity from culture to culture. Sometimes words even refer to culture-specific feelings for which there are no synonyms in other languages, like for example the Japanese term '*amae*', which roughly stands for a feeling of hopeful expectation that the other will show both concern and leniency towards you (Markus and Kitayama, 1991: 237, 239; see also Doi, 1973). They relate the independent and interdependent self with two groups of emotions, which they term respectively, '*ego-focused*' and '*other-focused*' (Markus and Kitayama, 1991: 235–9; Kitayama et al., 1995). The function of the first group of emotions, which primarily refers to the inner qualities of the person herself, is mainly to preserve and to promote the independence and autonomy of the individual, whereas the second group, which primarily concerns other persons, principally serves to confirm and preserve the construction of the self as an interdependent entity. We can illustrate this distinction with a brief characterization of the feelings of shame and the related feelings of self-respect.

Although by definition shame and self-respect imply a particular evaluation or assessment of one's own behavior, and therefore at first blush are ego-focused, two different forms of these emotions can be distinguished that are characteristic for respectively collectivist and individualistic cultures (Taylor, 1985). A person with an interdependent self-concept particularly feels ashamed when she realizes she has failed those who are so to speak part of her self-definition. She will feel ashamed when she realizes that in the eyes of the others she has not met the expectations of the collective, as a consequence of which the relationships with and possibly between the group members might be damaged. The community as a whole might be disgraced or dishonored because of her failing and this belief will also undermine her self-respect. Forms of shame and self-respect that are other-focused have the function to keep, restore or strengthen the mutual dependency between and the solidarity of the community members. The independent self on the other hand feels ashamed if she acknowledges she has not met the ideals she considers directive for herself. The person experiences a 'blow to her self-esteem' because she realizes that, measured by her own standards, she, to a certain extent or fully, misses particular personal qualities like courage, loyalty, honesty and strength of character. The feelings of shame of the independent self are not necessarily connected to a perceived failure in other people's eyes; she can feel ashamed about something particularistic. These feelings often lead to the intention to improve oneself, to be more faithful to one's ideals, or to accept that one misses certain qualities. These forms of shame and self-respect, which

are primarily ego-focused, have the function to preserve or to restore the unity and the integrity of the independent self.

## TENSIONS

Now that the main components of our inquiry into whether or not integration into Dutch society is possible for ethnic minorities while maintaining their ethno-cultural identity are clarified, we can pose a more specific question: Can immigrants from collectivistic cultures, more specifically people who grew up in a Moroccan or Turkish rural village, develop into liberal-democratic citizens while preserving their interdependent self-concept? We are inclined to answer this question negatively. There are unmistakably at least *tensions* between an interdependent self-concept and good liberal-democratic citizenship, which make integration into Dutch society by the indicated minority groups without changing their own identity very difficult or almost impossible. Here are some of these tensions.

First, dispositions to feel particular other-focused emotions are to a certain extent incompatible with the full possession of central liberal virtues. Think, for example, of the affective dispositions that form the seedbed for honor revenge, a phenomenon that recently got a lot of attention in the Dutch public media and in research, because of several incidents of murder committed to save or restore the honor of the family (Maris and Saharso, 2003; Strijbosch, 2001; Van Eck, 2001). In The Netherlands, honor revenge is committed mainly by members of the Turkish (-Kurd) minority. They believe that the family honor (*namus*), the self-respect of the father in particular, is breached by unchaste behavior of a female member of the family, and that killing the person who has dishonored her cleanses the honor of the family.[4] Honor revenge is a purification ritual and preferably has to be executed in public and by daylight. This kind of revenge seems to require an interdependent self-concept: feelings of honor and dignity are distinctively other-focused, not only because honor and self-appreciation are highly dependent on the perceived behavior of the female members, but also because in the end the feeling of dignity is derived from the honor of the family as a whole. Moreover, their sense of honor is not quite dependent on the status or worth that those concerned have in their own eyes, but on the judgment of the community. Therefore, without public knowledge of the dishonorable behavior of the woman or girl and the associated gossip and slander, male members of the family might decide not to commit murder to revenge their honor.

Which liberal virtues are incompatible with the indicated affective dispositions? The most obvious one is the virtue of allegiance to the law of a liberal democracy, that is, the inner willingness of the liberal citizen to observe the

laws and measures that are established and proclaimed on the basis of democratic rules. Honor revenge conflicts with criminal law that originates from such a procedure and therefore will be discarded by the liberal citizen as inadmissible. Additionally, a basic principle of the liberal-democracy is that only the state has the authority to use violence, and because the liberal citizen will uphold this principle of monopoly of violence, she will reject any form of taking the law into one's own hands, including honor revenge. Of greater importance, indeed, is the fact that the affective dispositions that motivate honor revenge are incompatible with the liberal cardinal virtue of respect for the freedom and rights of fellow citizens to arrange their lives according to their own values and preferences, as long as the same right of fellow-citizens is not violated. Honor revenge is related to the reputation of women and that reputation is tarnished when their behavior conflicts with a set of gender-specific rules of conduct. These rules seriously restrict their power of decision and because the rules have not been developed for the well-being of nor sanctioned by women, the rules restrict the freedom of women unjustifiably. In other words, honor revenge is based on discrimination of women by depriving them of the right to decide for themselves about very important matters like sexuality and relations (Maris and Saharso, 2003: 33). The liberal citizen can only indignantly reject such breaches of the right of self-determination.

One could object that although honor revenge is a practice that presupposes an interdependent self-concept, a person with such a self-concept does not necessarily have the affective dispositions that find their expression in honor revenge. On the contrary, though there are large groups of ethnic minorities originating from cultures with strong collectivist tendencies, honor revenge occurs only sporadically. Nevertheless, and we want to underscore this point, our description of honor revenge and the associated breach of freedom and rights point to a much deeper tension between an interdependent self-concept and liberal citizenship, a tension that seems to be rooted in the self-interpretation *as such*. Persons with an interdependent self-concept define both themselves and others as parts of a larger whole and such a conceptualization seems to be at odds with having the virtue of respect for the liberal basic rights, which is included in Rawls' principle of the greatest equal liberty. The fundamental liberties and political rights that are constitutive for a liberal democracy are awarded on the basis of the principle of equality to every adult citizen only because, and exclusively as far as, these citizens are *persons*. The virtue of respect for individual basic rights presupposes that the bearer of this virtue is capable of comprehending herself as well as the other as a person, and it is highly doubtful if someone with an interdependent self-concept is able to do so. Not every human being can be understood to be a person, and therefore as a bearer of freedom rights and political rights. Being

a person roughly presupposes having those qualities that enable us to treat someone as a responsible being or to award her the status of adulthood, which implies that she has acquired the qualities and capabilities of practical reasoning to take decisions and to attune her behavior to those decisions. If we consider an individual as a person purely and solely on the basis of such qualities, and recognize personhood as the only basis for awarding the mentioned basic rights, the individual is – as it were – conceived as *unattached* from whatever specific embeddedness in relations or social networks.

Of course, collectivist societies also award rights to individuals, but here rights are regarded foremost as secondary aspects of more fundamental social norms, positions and relations. In other words the right is not justified by appeal to the individual qua person, rather it is justified on the basis of their fulfilling certain duties towards the community, meeting the expectations of the group, holding a social role or having a certain social status (MacIntyre, 1990: 495–6). These distinctive conceptions of rights correspond to quite different notions of respect and human dignity. In collectivist cultures, in which persons conceptualize themselves and each other as interdependent entities, the dignity of individuals and the respect they deserve is primarily seen as a function of social norms, roles, positions or interpersonal associations. For example, someone deserves respect because he is your father, grandfather or ancestor, or because he has always served the community well. Sometimes the fact that someone holds an important position or is a member of a higher caste renders that individual a superior dignity that demands a respectful treatment. In contrast, characteristic for a liberal democracy is that the individual as such, purely on the basis of the qualities that make her a person and independent from any position in any social context, has intrinsic dignity. This individual intrinsic dignity deserves respect, which is expressed in the liberal virtue of respect for the rights of fellow man.

The tension between an interdependent self-concept and the respect for fellow humans can also be described from a more dramatic perspective. The liberal basic right to arrange one's life according to one's own values and preferences, to the extent that fellow citizens are not hindered in exercising the same right, implies the freedom to turn – in word and action – against the ideas and expectations of one's own community. The exercise of this right is difficult in a group with a strong collectivist culture, if not virtually impossible. The pressure of the community on the recalcitrant individual to conform to the prevailing conventions will be enormous and precisely because this individual is characterized by an interdependent self-concept, the sanctions of the group can be felt as extremely threatening. Due to the slight readiness of the group to accept ideas and behaviors that deviate from their own conventional morality, there is a considerable chance that the affective ties with

this individual are severed. And as the individual was taught to define herself in terms of the group, the imminent loss of such interdependent relations will threaten and undermine her identity. In other words: even though every citizen in a liberal democracy has the right to arrange his or her life according to his or her own view, minority groups with a collectivist mind-set will discourage their members to use that right in a variety of ways and the members themselves will, given their interdependent self-concept, often not have the proper mental equipment to exercise that right.

The reverse is also true; an interdependent self can easily result in claiming certain rights for members of one's own group which are denied to outsiders. As one's self is primarily understood in terms of the group to which one belongs, the distinction between members of the in-group and those of the out-group is highly relevant for persons with an interdependent self and, consequently, outsiders are often treated and approached in a different way than the in-group members (Markus and Kitayama, 1991: 229, 1994: 118, 120). And as persons with this self-concept share a common fate with the other group members, this form of 'discriminating' treatment predominantly favors the in-group members. The interdependent self prioritizes the interests and goals of the in-group over those of other (ethno-cultural) groups and since preferential treatment of members of one's own group serves the interests of the in-group, favoritism, for example, is not necessarily seen as morally reprehensible. Therefore, there seems to be an inherent tension between this self-concept and the political virtue of non-discrimination (or impartial treatment). Favoritism can also be understood as unconditional solidarity with regard to one's own group or community. For a liberal democratic citizen, however, group-solidarity and loyalty are always conditional. Good liberal-democratic citizenship is compatible with affective attachments to one's own (ethnic) group, but in case of a conflict between interests and expectations of the group on the one hand, and the values and principles of the liberal democracy on the other, the latter should be overriding. If a liberal citizen does act against these principles,[5] for instance by appointing a family member instead of a more suitable candidate, she will realize that she is doing so and acknowledge her wrongdoing. This attitude is characteristic of what Rawls calls *morality of principle* (Rawls, 1971: 472). Favoritism on the other hand is typical for a *morality of association*. The modern liberal democracy is not held together by respect for authority or by feelings of solidarity but by a sense of justice: 'the citizen body as a whole is not generally bound together by ties of fellow feelings between individuals, but by the principles of justice. While every citizen is a friend to some citizens, no citizen is a friend to all' (Rawls, 1971: 474).

This section has illustrated that the liberal virtues require an independent self-concept. However, persons with an independent self-concept are not

necessarily good citizens; it is questionable whether an egoistic person with an independent self-concept has a disposition to respect the equal rights of citizens. Nor is a person adhering to a racist ideology averse to discrimination. So having an independent self is a necessary, but certainly not a sufficient condition for being a good liberal democratic citizen. This self being a necessary condition raises questions regarding some current reflections on divided societies and cultural pluralism. Spinner-Halev, for example, argues that the state should acknowledge its citizens' nested identities. These nested identities consist of two parts: a particularistic one, formed by being a member of a particular community, and a societal one. On our view, obviously, a nested identity comprising two diverging self-concepts is psychologically unfeasible. Spinner-Halev's hope to reduce the tension and fear between groups by ensuring that people 'recognize that each community's identity is important to many people, that members of each community recognize this fact about the other, and that each community accepts each other's legitimate place in polity' (Spinner-Halev, 2003: 61) is psychologically realistic only if the members of the communities have acquired a rather robust independent self-concept. The same applies to Galston's plea for liberal pluralism, with its core virtue of tolerance (2002: 119, 126). According to Galston, a liberal pluralist society must organize itself around the principle of maximum feasible accommodation of diverse legitimate ways of life: 'This principle expresses (and requires) the practice of tolerance – the conscientious reluctance to act in ways that impede others from living in accordance with their various conceptions of what gives life meaning and worth' (2002: 119). The virtue of tolerance, as we have argued before, can only be an attribute of persons with an independent self-concept; as indeed many cultural values in our societies are compatible with this self-concept and its characteristic cognitions, emotions and motivations only.

## CONCLUSION

On the basis of the tensions we have described, we cautiously conclude that developing into a good citizen in a liberal democracy cannot be combined with the full preservation of an interdependent self-concept. Can we draw the more far-reaching conclusion that a liberal-democratic state has to take measures with the intention to change the interdependent self-concept of immigrants from collectivist cultures into the direction of an independent self-concept? It can hardly be denied that citizens with liberal virtues are indispensable for well-functioning liberal-democratic institutions. But does this functional relationship provide the state the right to see to it that the members of the younger generation develop into good liberal citizens? And if the state

has this right, does the state then also have the duty to exercise that right against those immigrants who define their self in terms of the group? Or should the government be content with the development of a *modus vivendi,* that is, a situation in which these immigrants accept the rules and principles of the democratic constitutional state, not out of moral considerations like respect for the intrinsic dignity of persons, but indeed mainly for reasons of self- and group interests? Let us discuss these options in turn, beginning with the least intrusive option.

A *modus vivendi* was generally accepted or condoned in The Netherlands with regard to many indigenous religious groups that could be characterized as collectivistic communities that – and this surely is an understatement – did not excel in displaying the liberal inclinations (Spiecker and Steutel, 2001). This could lead to the suggestion that such a societal organization is also well-suited for the immigrant groups. In our view the *modus vivendi* option in the long run forms a threat for the liberal-democratic arrangement of Dutch society. The main reason for our position is that until about fifty years ago the vast majority of the Dutch population shared a common or national culture; citizens of all religious denominations strongly identified with the Christian-Humanist tradition, shared the same historical narratives and documents, had collective experiences, and spoke the same language. Therefore, they had developed common ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving. Despite differences in group cultures and religions, the citizens shared – metaphorically speaking – the 'same roof' (Scheffer, 2000). However, the largest groups of immigrants brought with them quite different (collectivist and Islamic) cultures and cannot or do not want to identify with the common Dutch culture. These groups will form the majority populations of the main Dutch cities within a few years. Therefore, in our view a *modus vivendi* regarding these immigrant groups will not provide sufficiently strong guarantees for the preservation of a well-functioning democracy.

This brings us to the second option, namely that the state has a right to promote the development and the establishment of liberal virtues on a large scale. If a *modus vivendi* undermines a liberal democracy and if a liberal democracy is valuable, the conclusion follows that the state has the right to try to ensure that the liberal democracy is sustained. However, nothing is said as yet about the way in which the state may promote this and if promoting may have a compulsory character. Is the state entitled to oblige all citizens to accept and act according to the liberal virtues even though this involves a certain loss of one's own identity, more in particular the decline of the interdependent self-concept? This question can be answered from different angles, but we will focus on our own domain, education. The question then is: does the state have a duty to see to it that schools provide an education of the liberal virtues to all children?

We believe that the state has this duty indeed. This does not imply that all schools become public schools nor that schools with a religious or cultural identity cannot exist, but it does mean that every school, whatever its character, is legally obliged to provide a particular kind and content of education. However, this duty does have a consequence for an education that stimulates a development of an interdependent self. An interdependent self results from an upbringing and education which emphasizes that the child or the pupil meet the expectations of the in-group or the community and that firmly discourages critical reflection on these expectations. In interdependent child rearing special attention is given to those circumstances in which the child does not adjust or behaves improperly; if the child deviates from the expectations of the group members, invariably corrective measures are called for. On the basis of cross-cultural research Grusec et al. (1977: 275) conclude:

> Because interdependence is a central aspect of a child's sense in collectivist cultures, there is less need to convince children, through logical arguments, of the importance of 'taking in' pro-social values. Also, because counterarguments are not encouraged or expected, there is less need to use reasoning or logical arguments'.

In contrast, we believe that compulsory education should stimulate critical thinking, because the state has the duty to promote the acquisition of liberal virtues in schools. Thereby the state will *ipso facto* hamper and discourage the development of an interdependent self-concept.

Returning to Heine's notion of self-ways, we want to point to a possible task of schools and teachers. If we interpret these self-ways from a specific educational perspective, the (German) notion of *Funktionale Erziehung* (functional education') comes to mind, an education, in which parents or other adults to a great extent are just the executors or instruments of the Objective Spirit (Hegel), of Absolute Values (Spranger). On a more mundane interpretation this means that teachers and school administrators should reflect on the question which social practices, school customs, narratives, icons, proverbs, etc. – which are part of the self-ways – do influence the development of an independent self-concept of their pupil (see also De Ruyter and Conroy, 2002). For, these might be as influential on the development of the pupils as the official curricular content.

## NOTES

1. The most important rights of that package are the well-known civic liberties (e.g. the freedom of expression and the freedom of religion), the political basic rights (e.g. the right to vote and the right to run for office), and the fundamental rights that are included in the idea of rule of law (e.g., the right not to be arrested at will and the right to a fair trial).

2. This explanation of good citizenship not only is brief, it is also limited. Indeed, much more than the mentioned political-moral virtues is expected from the good citizen, but in our view these qualities do form the heart of good liberal citizenship (Spiecker and Steutel, 1995).

3. Following on what we stated at the end of the former section, one should note that the notions 'independent' and 'interdependent self', just like 'individualist' and 'collectivist cultures' are not ontological categories but theoretical constructs; they are ideal types in the Weberian sense. Therefore, it is a mistake to identify the psychological categories of independent and the interdependent self-concepts as respectively an unencumbered and encumbered self. Moreover, both self-concepts presuppose a metaphysical 'encumberedness', for both are inextricably connected with cultural values.

4. In contrast with The Netherlands, in Turkey honor killing still leads to lower punishments than is the case with common murders, because of the importance attached to family honor in this predominantly collectivistic culture. For instance, if the cleansing of honor regards adulterous spouses, the jail sentence can be reduced to one-eighth of the maximum prison sentence.

5. The idea that no good liberal citizen will ever act against the liberal principles is of course an ideal.

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